

THE  
Unreasonableness  
OF THE  
DOCTRINE  
OF THE  
TRINITY

Briefly Demonstrated,  
In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

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*From a private copy, of said intelligence.*

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*Amos.*

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London, Printed in the Year, 1892.

Universal Science

OF THE

DOCTRINE

OF THE

TRINITY

By J. D. D.

In a Letter to a Friend

and a full and complete

Exposition

of the same, as given in the Year 1801.

And the witness of the Spirit  
which dwelleth in you shall testify  
that ye have received the Son of God.

## The Inevitability of the Doctrine of the Trinity briefly demonstrated

**I**N every case, you are invited to  
ask the question, "What is the  
basis of this doctrine?" and the answer  
is, "The Bible." The Bible is the  
basis of all Christian doctrine, and the  
Bible teaches the doctrine of the Trinity.  
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Now, you may ask, "What is the  
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The Father and the Son are  
one God, but they differ in person. The  
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I don't intend to prove by the  
Bible that there are two Persons in God,  
but I intend to prove by the Bible that  
there are two Persons in God. I don't  
intend to prove by the Bible that there  
are two Persons in God, but I intend  
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to prove by the Bible that there are  
two Persons in God, but I intend to  
prove by the Bible that there are two  
Persons in God.

And now I conclude my Address to the Society. I have said that I have no doubt that there is a God, and that there is a Jesus Christ, and that there is a Holy Spirit, and that there is a Kingdom of God on Earth, and that there is a Life to come. I have said that I have no doubt that there is a God, and that there is a Jesus Christ, and that there is a Holy Spirit, and that there is a Kingdom of God on Earth, and that there is a Life to come. I have said that I have no doubt that there is a God, and that there is a Jesus Christ, and that there is a Holy Spirit, and that there is a Kingdom of God on Earth, and that there is a Life to come.

The following appears in the *Free Press* of  
 Chicago, from a note out of the Tribune  
 office, dated June 10th. *Frederick W. Mac-*  
*donald* writes, *from the Tribune*, where-  
 upon my *Observer* provides: "I have you  
 as a critic, and much to do with it, and  
 an hour's work in the Tribune to con-  
 sider the Tribune. I do not mean that it  
 can turn in the same way. It may  
 certainly be placed in the hands of the  
 Southern Holy Spirit, as the great High  
 God, because the Southern church teaches  
 that the Father only is the great High  
 God. But I think it better to let the  
 Tribune stand the Tribune of the  
 Father and God."

You know, Sir, that Men have invented

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



The first of these is the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), which has been the most influential of the medical journals in the United States since its founding in 1883. It is a weekly publication, and its content is primarily focused on the latest research and clinical practice in the field of medicine. The journal is published by the American Medical Association, which is a professional organization of physicians in the United States. The journal is known for its high standards of quality and its commitment to providing its readers with the most up-to-date and accurate information available in the field of medicine.

[illegible][illegible]





[The main body of the page contains two columns of text that are extremely dark and illegible due to the quality of the scan. The text appears to be organized into paragraphs within each column.]

this is but a Supposition) and that the Scripture gives the Name and Attributes of God to Christ and the Holy Ghost. This being supposed, let's see whether the Consequence they draw from thence is *natural* and *reasonable*, whether the Doctrine they build upon that Consequence implies no *Contradiction*, or at least whether it is *intelligible*.

1<sup>st</sup>. It is an amazing thing that the Holy Ghost hath not revealed to us in *express Terms* so important and necessary a Doctrine, and which those Gentlemen call the Foundation of the Christian Religion; or at least, that neither Christ nor his Apostles have drawn the Trinitarian Consequence. Is it not a great Prejudice against that Doctrine, and is not one spe to believe for that very reason, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is a meer human Invention? In effect, is it likely that God, who was pleased to reveal to us so many things of so great Importance, if compared to this Doctrine; that God, I say, who hath taught us in his Word so many Particulars, would have omitted the most Essential Part, and not expressly taught us the Doctrine of the Trinity? Must so important a Matter, on which the great Doctrines of the *Incarnation* and *Satisfaction* depend; and the whole Dispensation of the Gospel runs, and which sets forth God's Mercy and Justice with a Lustre infinitely greater than the poor and beggarly System of Hereticks; must, I say, so great and so glorious a Subject be so express as to lie unknown without the help of human Consequences? Shall the Gospel teach us that Christ went into *Jerusalem* riding upon an Ass, and not teach us in express words that he is *consubstantial* with the Father, and the *most High God*? What can one say to justify so surprizing a Conduct? Is it becoming God's Wisdom that the Knowledge of so great a Subject, and impenetrable to Reason, should depend upon a certain Consequence, which Men subject to Error ought to draw? What Reason can be alledged to prove that God, who hath revealed to us so many things

of an infinitely lesser moment, ought not clearly and expressly to acquaint us with the Doctrine of the Trinity, but give up so great a Discovery to the weak Capacity of Men? Certainly this is to wrong the Divine Wisdom and Goodness. Sir, you must confess that this Reflection alone is sufficient to destroy the Preences of our *Confession*, *Doctors*, and convince any sincere and rational Man of the Falsity of this Doctrine.

2<sup>dly</sup>. This Consequence is so unreasonable, and contrary to the Gospel, that one cannot but wonder how it ever came into a Man's Mind. Methinks a sincere and unprejudiced Christian should reason thus when he reads the Gospel. "The Scripture ought to be explained by it self. The true, Christ is called God therein; but can I infer from thence that he is the most High God? Christ himself, who is honoured with that Title, teaches me that Life Eternal consists in knowing the Father the only true God; and his Apostle assures us that we have but one God, even the Father: the Scripture teaches us the same in many other places of the Gospel. Moreover, Christ calls the Father *his God*, and often prays to him: He says that the Father is *greater* than he, that he can do nothing of himself, but that the Father who dwelleth in him doth the Works. He assures us that he doth not know the Day of Judgment, &c. I find the same clearly express, and often repeated in the Holy Scripture. The Question therefore is, Whether I must believe that Christ is the most High God, because he is called *God* in the Gospel, tho the same Gospel assures me that the Father only is the most High God? The Question is, Whether, for the same reason, I must acknowledg Christ to be the most High God, tho he himself assures me that the Father is his God, and is invoked by him as such; tho he expressly tells me that the Father is greater than he, that he can do nothing of himself, that all his Miracles are the Effects of his Father's Power; tho he assures me that he is

B

"ignorant

" *knoweth of the Day of Judgment, and that the Knowledge of that Secret belongs only to the Father, the most High God?* *After I declare and to profess a Confession, I cannot believe that Christ is the most High God, and thus the Trinitarian Confession, without believing the Son of God, who assures me that the Father only is the most High God. Must I prefer a human Confidence, before the Oracles of Christ? In a word, Doth it stand to reason, that I should believe the Trinitarians sooner than the Son of God?*

*You see, Sir, that this is a close and natural Reasoning. The Christian who argues thus, contrives no new Words, and draws no Consequences unknown to the Scripture: He follows the Gospel step by step, and speaks in very Language. Christ tells him that the Father only is God, he conceives him upon his word, and will by no means contradict him. In short, if the Father only is the most High God, it is impossible Christ should be the most High God; and by Consequence, if he is called God, it must of necessity be in the same Sense as Solomon, and the Judges and Magistrates are honoured with that Title, because they represent his Person, act in his Name, and are invested with his Power and Authority. The Consequence of our Christian is not far stretch'd, dark, unnatural, and doth not contradict the Gospel: No, it is clear, easy, natural, and perfectly agreeable to the Genius of the Scripture, and all the parts of the Gospel. Nay, it is none of his, Christ himself drew it before him, and he doth but follow his steps. Read the 10th Chapter of St. John's Gospel: The Jews out of Spite and Malice, accuse him of making himself God. Now doth our Saviour justify himself? Doth he tell them that he is God? No: *It is not written, says he, in your Law, I said ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the World, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?* Here Christ*

plainly shows that he is the most High God, only he sheweth, that such Judgments and Reasonings may be filed out, upon the account of the Power and Authority they have received from God, which more might be so called because of his glorious Consecration, as having received immediately from God a Commission and an Authority far exceeding any other. Is there any Trinitarian that can shew a Consequence drawn by Christ himself, or make his Opinion? No, this is the Privilege of the Unitarians; and the Defenders of the Trinity have no other Consequences but such as they coin, without the least appearance of Reason, and against the whole Current of the Bible. What I have said of Christ, may be easily applied to the Holy Ghost. Have the Application to you.

Now, Sir, give me leave to introduce a Trinitarian Reasoning according to his Principles, and shewing his Consequence. " *Tha true, says he, that the Scripture teaches us that the Father only is God. I cannot deny that Christ expresses himself so as to make us believe that he is the most High God. It is certain the Gospel is full of such Texts: But at the same time I observe that Christ is called God in the Scripture. Indeed the Holy Ghost is not expressly called God, but I can shew by the help of my Consequences, that he is so called. This being supposed, I argue thus. The Scripture assures us that there is but one God, but that Title is ascribed not only to the Father, but also to the Son and Holy Ghost. From whence I conclude by a natural Consequence, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are that One God. To name, they object to me, that Christ calls the Father the only True God; and St. Paul expressly says, that to us there is but One God the Father. I confess this is a great Objection; however, it may be answered, that the Father signifies in those places, not only the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost. I cannot maintain the*

— second.



Second Consequence, I have just now shewn, but by a short which necessarily arises from it. As for those Times where Christ tells us that the Father is greater than he, that he can do nothing of himself, that the Father is his God, that he is ignorant of the Day of Judgment, and such like Truths, which seem to prove that he is not the most High God: One may answer them with a fourth Consequence, which shews this Diffusion, &c. That the Father is greater than he, &c. is *he is a Man, but so is a God* he is equal to the Father, can do all things of himself, &c. he is much more reasonable to draw all those Consequences, tho never so limited, than to explain the Title of God given to Christ in the Scripture, in the sense of the Hereticks.

Indeed, Sir, this System, made up of Consequences, is diverting enough. The Scripture it seems affords no positive Arguments in the behalf of the Doctrine of the Trinity. It runs altogether upon chimerical, absurd and contradictory Consequences. This System I find is pleasing enough, but I must confess I am extremely sorry to see the Gospel so strangely misapplied by its Professors. Is it not to scorn the *Old Law*, to heap up Consequences to find out what it doth not say? Why do those Gentlemen complain that the Papists make a *Mess of Wax* of it? Are their Consequences more unnatural than those which they themselves draw? 'Tis true, the Papists are grossly mistaken in believing that the Bread of the Eucharist is converted into the Body of Christ after the Consecration. Their Error arises from sticking too close to the Letter of Christ's words, who said, *This is my Body*. Christ said so, will they say; and we believe him. But if I dare say so, the Protestants, who are Trinitarians as well as they, do not shew so much Respect for his Oracles in this Case. Christ says in express words, that the Father is the only true God. No, say they, the Father is not the only true God; the Son and the Holy Ghost must be added to him.

1411. Having thus confuted the great Consequences of the Trinitarians, I will now consider the Doctrine of the Trinity in it self, and see whether it implies no Contradiction. The Father, say they, is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God. Now I ask them what Notion we have of God? They will undoubtedly answer, that God is a Being Eternal, Intelligent, All-wise, All-good, All-powerful, &c. This being supposed, since the Father is God, he must needs be a Being Eternal, Intelligent, &c. Thus much must be said of the Son, and Holy Ghost: Here are therefore three Beings Eternal, Intelligent, &c. For since the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are not confounded, but distinguished, and every one of them is God; the Notion which we have of God must needs suit every one of them distinctly, and consequently, they are three Beings Eternal, Intelligent, &c. that is to say, three Gods. But the Trinitarians will not allow this Polytheism: No, say they, we maintain the contrary. 'Tis true, the Father is a Being Eternal, &c. so is the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Yet they are not Three, but One Being Eternal, &c. In a word, we acknowledge that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, yet they are not Three Gods, but One God. Sir, when the Trinitarians can shew me that the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, which believes that three Bodies of Christ, which are upon three different Altars, are but one Body of Christ; when, I say, they can shew me that this Opinion is not Parallel with theirs, or implies no Contradiction, I shall willingly confess that the Doctrine of the Trinity is not contradictory. In the mean time, I must tell you, that 'tis pity the Trinitarians should wrest the Scripture, and leave no Stone unturned to produce at last a Doctrine full of Contradictions. Their last Shift and Retrenchment to avoid the Objection concerning the Contradictions, consists in this, viz. that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are not Three Gods, but Three Persons and One God.







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*The Belief of the ATHANASIAN CREED  
not required by the Church of England as  
necessary to Salvation.*

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In a Letter to a Friend.

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*My worthy and dear Friend;*

**S**IR, You cannot but remember, that when I was lately in your good Company, there was a Discourse concerning the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as delivered in the Creed call'd *Athanasius's*; and that there was a Person present who declared his Opinion to be, that the Church of *England* did not require the Belief of that Doctrine as necessary to eternal Salvation, and the Reasons he gives for that his Opinion are briefly these, *viz.*

1. Because (saith he) no Persons are by the Church of *England* (nor I verily think by any Church) ever baptized into the Faith, as contained in that Creed, but in the Apostles Creed.

2. As Persons are admitted by the Church of *England* into her Communion without the Belief of that Creed, so in her Office of

the Visitation of the Sick they are not examined in it, but upon a Declaration of stedfast Faith in all the Articles of the Apostles Creed (in which I could never yet find any thing of an *Athanasian* Trinity) Absolution is granted; and in the Office for Burial that Person is owned to be a Christian Brother: and in the last Clause of the Exhortation, immediately preceding the Apostles Creed, in that Office of Visitation 'tis plain, that he that believes the Articles of the Apostles Creed, doth believe as a Christian Man should. And,

3. Because in the Exhortation, almost at the End of Office of Publick Baptism, he that hath declared his Belief of the Articles of the Apostles Creed, is said to believe in God; and in the same Exhortation the Child (as to

A Faith)



( 2 )  
Faith) is chiefly to be taught the Creed, which I presume was never understood of the *Athanasian* Creed.

4. Look upon the third Answer in the Church-Catechism, where the Child is taught to answer, that his Godfathers and Godmothers did promise that he should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, which Articles the Child being required to rehearse, *Quest. 5.* is directed, and says the Apostles Creed; and it is also evident by the Office of Baptism, no other can be understood in the Baptismal Vow.

5. In the Office of Confirmation, the first Question and Answer, the Person to be confirmed doth declare in the Presence of God and the Congregation, that he doth renew the solemn Promise and Vow that was made in his Name at Baptism, which was to believe the Articles of the Apostles Creed; and neither the Church of *England*, nor yet any other ever dared yet to impose the *Athanasian* Creed as a Condition of Baptism, no more than *Pius IV.* and his Council of *Trent*, dared to impose their novel Faith as a Condition of the same, but content themselves (as we do) with that which bears the Name of the Apostles, as containing the Abstract of all Primitive Christianity. See *Dr. Ford's* Sermon before the Lord-Mayor, *June 5,*

1692. p. 18. And by such Practice 'tis apparent, as the Doctor there clearly argues, that whatsoever Men may talk, yet they do not believe those Articles to be *de fide*, and necessary to Salvation, without the Profession of which they admit by Baptism Profelytes into the Church; and consequently that Men cannot exclude those from their Church, for not believing those Articles that they dare not impose, nor mention to those they admit to be Members of their Church.

But I find 'tis commonly objected, that the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as delivered in the *Athanasian* Creed, is contained in the 39 Articles; and that every Clergy-man that holds any Place of Profit in the Church is bound to subscribe them, and give his unfeigned Assent and Consent to the same. To which may be answered;

1<sup>st</sup>. That those 39 Articles are not Articles of Faith but Peace; as several of her most learned Bishops have plainly declared. See Archbishop *Bromhall's* *Schism guarded*, p. 396. Which Passage is both cited and approved by the excellent Bishop *Fowler*, in his *Free Discourse*. And the Bishops *Laud*, *Taylor*, *Sanderfon*, have expressed themselves to the same purpose. And in a word, the Title of the Articles says as much.

2dly.



2dly. Because, If the 39 Articles were Articles of Faith, the Church would baptize into them.

3dly. If the 39 Articles became Articles of Faith by subscribing them, then it would follow that the Clergy would have more Articles of Faith than the Laity, and then further there would be more than one Faith, which is contrary to the express Words of Holy Scripture.

4thly. Because in the sixth Article the Church declares that all things necessary to Salvation are contained in the Holy Scriptures; and thereto nothing is to be added, nor from it any thing to be diminished; the Canonical Books of the Holy Scripture are in that 6th Article named; & thereby the 39 Articles are excluded, otherwise than agreeable with them. But I find it's farther objected,

*Object.* That the 8th Article requires that the *Nicene*, *Athanasian* and *Apostles* Creeds be thoroughly received and believed; and hence it seems evident, that the Church imposes the Belief of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as delivered in the Creed called *Athanasius's*.

*Sol.* To this it may be answered; (1) 'Tis not said as necessary to Salvation. (2) In that very 8th Article the Church doth not absolutely require the Belief of it; but for that, or supposing it may be proved firmly from the Holy

Scripture: And that this is the Meaning of the Church of *England* doth appear, 1<sup>st</sup>. By the second Question, and Answer in the Form of ordering Priests and consecrating Bishops, set forth by Authority, where it is apparent that the Person to be ordained Priest is directed by that Form to declare, that he is perswaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrines required of Necessity to Salvation; and that he hath determined to teach nothing (as required of Necessity to eternal Salvation) but that which he shall be perswaded may be concluded and proved by the H. Scripture. You may see the like in the Form of consecrating Bishops, the second Question and Answer, and by the fourth Question and Answer, in the publick Form of ordering Priests: The Priest is to promise to drive away all erroneous and strange Doctrines, contrary to God's Word: Now I presume that every erroneous Doctrine is to be look'd upon as strange, and that we must not retain an erroneous Doctrine, because it has been of long standing.

And further, in the fourth Question and Answer, in the Form of consecrating Bishops: The Bishop to be consecrated doth promise to drive away all erroneous and strange Doctrine contrary to God's Word, and both privately and publickly to call upon others to do the same. But

But to end, supposing but not granting that the Church of *England* had required the Belief of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as delivered in the Creed call'd the *Athanasian*.

1. She doth not assume the Privilege of Infallibility, for then she would be guilty of that which she charges (and that justly) as a Crime on the Church of *Rome*.

2. In Article 20 the Church of *England* sets forth what Authority it is she claims in Matters of Faith, or rather disclaims what Authority she hath not.

1<sup>st</sup>. It's not an Authority to impose any thing contrary to the written Word of God. Nor,

2<sup>dly</sup>. An Authority to expound one Place of Scripture that it may be contrary to another; plainly that as the Church ought not to decree any thing contrary to the same, so besides the same she ought not to decree any thing to be believed for Necessity of Salvation.

Now from what hath been said it seems to follow, that the Church of *England* doth not require the Belief of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity as delivered in the *Athanasian* Creed as necessary to Salvation. For,

If she baptizeth not into that Faith, if he is said to believe as a Christian Man ought to believe,

that declares his Belief of only the Apostles Creed, and is thereupon owned as a Christian Brother; if thereby he is said to believe in God; to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith; if the Person to be confirmed renews only a Promise to believe the Apostles Creed; if the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not to be believed by being in the 39 Articles, or by their being subscribed to, they being no Articles of Faith, as by the Title of them and Preface before them is evident, no Person being baptized into them. And the sixth Article being a Key to all the rest, and shewing us very plainly how far they are to be believed; and if whatsoever else is before asserted is evidently to be seen, it appears for those Reasons, that the Doctrine of the Trinity, as set down in the *Athanasian* Creed, is not such an Article of Faith, in the Opinion of the Church, as is necessarily to be believed in order to eternal Salvation. Thus, Sir, according to my mean Ability, I have faithfully and conscientiously discharged my Promise, and beg the Favour of a Line, if this come safe to your Hands. I am,

Sir,

Yours,

F I N I S.

THE  
PREFACE  
BY  
M. CHILLINGWORTH'S  
JUDGMENT  
OF THE  
RELIGION  
OF  
Protestants, &c.

# THE P R E F A C E.

**I** Presume, there's no Protestant acquainted in any measure with Books that defend his Religion against the Papists, who has not a high Esteem of Mr. Chillingworth's Book, intitled, *The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation: A Man singled out from among all the learned Men of these times, as best qualified for that Undertaking against a most learned Jesuit.* His Book in order to its printing, was not only approved of by those of greatest Learning and Authority in the Church, but was commended to the Press by the Suffrages of the then Vice-Chancellor, and both the King's and Margaret Professors of Divinity in the University of Oxon; and since its Publication has had the highest Commendations of most, if not all learned Protestants, as the most learned and judicious Work of any that had been published before upon that Subject. It was first printed in the Year 1637. and dedicated to King Charles the First; and then reprinted 1663. and for more common Use made shorter, by leaving out personal Matters; was printed again Anno 1684. as a most rational Defence against Popery, then breaking in upon us like a Land-Flood.

Out of this excellent Book I have collected these excellent Passages which give a brief Account of the Religion of Protestants, what it is; what Errors are dangerous, what not; that differing Protestants agree in all things necessary to Salvation; that it's Unchristian to use Force in Matters merely Religious; what is the Fountain of all the Schisms of the Church, and the Calamities that have infested Christianity about Opinions in Religion; and that universal Liberty well moderated is the way to reduce Christians to Truth and Unity.

Of



## Of the Religion of Protestants.

**C**hap. 6. Num. 25. Know then, Sir, that when I say the Religion of Protestants is in Evidence to be preferred before yours. As on the one side I do not understand by your Religion the Doctrine of *Belonius* or *Barbican*, or any other private Man amongst you; nor the Doctrine of the *Abbas*, or of the *Jeſuits*, or of the Dominicans, or of any what particular Company amongst you, but that wherein you all agree, or possibly disagree. The *Doctrines of the Council of Trent*. So accordingly as the latter side, by the *Articles of Protestants*, I do not understand the Doctrine of *Julius* or *Calvin*, or *Helmsius*, nor the Constitution of *Augustine* or *Gregory*, nor the Constitution of *Adrian*, nor the Articles of the Church of England, nor the Homogeneity of Protestant Confessions, but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater Homogeneity, as a perfect Rule of their Faith and Actions; that is, the *SMITH*, the *SMITH*, I say the *SMITH* only is the Religion of Protestants I understand, all they believe besides it, and the plain, unchangeable, immutable Constitution of it, will say they hold it as a Matter of Opinion, but not as a Matter of Faith and Reason; neither can they with Conscience of their own Ground believe it themselves, nor require the Belief of it of others, whether good men and most Christian of Profession. I, for my part, since I am (and as I truly believe and hope) an impartial Searcher of the *truth* in *eternal* Happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any Rest for the Soul of my Foot, but upon this Rock only. I see clearly and with mine own Eyes, that there are Faults against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the

same Fathers against themselves, a Council of Fathers of one Age, against a Council of Fathers of another Age; the Church of one Age against the Church of another Age; traditive Interpretations of Scripture are presented, but there are few or none to be found: No Tradition but only of Scripture can derive It self from the Fountains, but may be plainly proved, either to have been brought in, in such an Age after Christ, or that in such an Age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient Certainty but of the Scripture only, for any considering Man to build upon. This therefore, and that only, I have Reason to believe; this I will profess, according to this I will live, and for this, if there be Occasion, I will nobly willingly, but even gladly lose my Life, though I should be sorry that Christians should take it from me. Propose me any thing out of this Book, and require whether I believe It or no; and then it never to me as a Matter of Opinion, I will subscribe It with Hand and Heart, as knowing no Demonstration can be stronger than this, *God hath said so, therefore It is true*. In other things I will take no Man's Liberty of Judgment from him, neither shall any Man take thine from me; I will think no Man do worth than or do worth Christians. I will leave no Man the less for differing in Opinion from me; and what measure I meet to others, I expect from them again: I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that Man ought not to require any more of any Man than this. To believe the Scripture as the God's Word, to endeavour to find the true Sense of it, and to live according to it.

B. 37. This is the Religion which I have chosen, after a long Deliberation, and I am verily

will be persuaded that I have chosen wisely, much more wisely than if I had guided my self according to your Churches Authority; for the Scripture being all true, I am secured by believing nothing & 6. that I shall believe no Falshood in Matters of Faith: And if I mistake the Sense of Scripture, and so fall into Error, yet I am secure from any Danger thereby, if but your Grounds be true; because endeavouring to find the true Sense of Scripture, I cannot but hold my Error without Pertinacy, and be ready to forsake it, when a more true and a more probable Sense shall appear unto me. And then all necessary Truth being as I have proved, plainly set down in Scripture, I am certain by believing Scripture to believe all necessary Truth; and so that does so, if his Life be answerable to his Faith, how is it possible he should fall of Salvation?

### *Scripture the only Rule whereby to Judge of Controversies.*

**CHAP. 2. N. 11.** — To speak properly (as Men shou'd speak when they write of Controversies in Religion) the Scripture is not a Judge of Controversies, but a *Rule only*, and *the only Rule for Christians to judge them by*. Every Man is to judge for himself with the Judgment of Discretion, and to chuse either his Religion first, and then his Church, as we say; or as you, his Church first, and then his Religion. But by the Consent of both sides, every Man is to judge and chuse; and the Rule whereby he is to direct his Choice, if he be a natural Man, is Reason; if he be already a Christian, Scripture, which we say is the Rule to judge all Controversies by, yet not all jointly, but all the Controversies of Christianity, of those that are already agreed upon this first Principle, *that the Scripture is the Word of God*. But that there is any Man, or any Company of Men, appointed to be Judge for all Men, that we deny; and that I believe you will never prove.

### *Every Man to judge for himself in Matters of Religion.*

**CHAP. 2. N. 16.** In civil and criminal Causes the Points have for the most part so much Interest, and very often to little honesty, that they will not submit to a Law though never so plain, if it be against them; or will not see it to be against them, though it be never so plainly. Whereas if Men were honest, and the Law were plain and extended to all Cases, there would be little need of Judges. Now in Matters of Religion, where the Question is, Whether every Man be a fit Judge and Chooser for himself? we suppose Men honest, and such as understand the Difference between a Moment and Eternity; and such Men, we conceive, will think it highly concerns them to be of the true Religion, but nothing at all that time or that Religion should be the true: And then we suppose that all the necessary Points of Religion are plain and easily, and consequently every Man in this Case to be a competent Judge for himself; because it concerns himself to judge right as much as Eternal Happiness is worth; and if through his own Default he judge amiss, he alone shall suffer for it.

**CH. 2. N. 17.** — If they [Men] would be themselves, and be constant themselves should be, in the choice of their Religion; the Servants of God and not of Men; if they would allow, that the Way to Heaven is no other now than Christ left it, his Yoke, no heavier than he made it; that the Belief of no more Difficulties is required now as Salvation, than was in the Primitive Church; that no Error, if in a self-delusive and excommunicating from Salvation now, which was not then; if instead of being zealous Papists, earnest Calvinists, rigid Lutherans, they would become Christians, and be content that others should be plain and honest Christians; if all Men would believe the Scripture, and freeing themselves from Prejudice and Faction, would sincerely endeavour to find the true Sense of it, and live according to it; and consequently of



others but to do so, not denying their Communion to any that do so; would so order their publick Service of God, that all which do so may without Scruple or Hypocrisy, or Profection against any Part of it, join with them: it is, who does not see that (seeing as we suppose here, and shall prove hereafter) all necessary Truths are plainly and evidently set down in Scripture; there would of necessity be among all Men, in all things necessary, Unity of Opinion? And notwithstanding any other Differences that are or could be, Unity of Communion, and Charity, and mutual Toleration; by which means all Schism and Heresy would be banished the World, and those wretched Contentions which now rend and tear in pieces not the Goss, but the Marble and Bowels of Christ, which mutual Pride and Tyranny, and cursing, killing and damning, would make immortal, should speedily receive a most blessed Catastrophe. But of this hereafter, when we shall come to the Question of Schism, wherein I persuade myself that I shall plainly show that the most vehement Accusers are the greatest Offenders, and that there are indeed at this time the greatest Schismatics, who make the Way to Heaven narrower, the Yoke of Christ heavier, the Differences of Faith greater, the Conditions of Ecclesiastical Government harder and surdier, than they were made at the Beginning by Christ and his Apostles; they who talk of Unity, and aim at Tyranny, and will have Peace with none but with their Slaves and Vassals.

*Prop. No. 2.*—For what one Conclusion is there in the whole Fabrick of my Discourse, that is essentially deducible out of this one Principle, *That all things necessary to Salvation are plainly set down in the Scriptures.* On what one Conclusion almost of Importance is there in your Book, which is not by this one clearly refuted?—Grant this, and it will presently follow, in opposition to your first Conclusion, and the Arguments of your first Chapter, that amongst men of different Opinions touching the necessary controverted Questions of Religion, such as may with Probability be supposed on both sides (and such are the Sources of Persecutions) good Men and

Lovers of Truth of all sides may be found, because all necessary things being supplied evidence concerning them, with Men so qualified, there will be no Differences; there being no more certain Sign that a Point is not evident, than that honest and understanding and indolent Men, and such as give themselves Liberty of Judgment, after a mature Consideration of the Matter, differ about it.

### *Of disagreeing Protestants.*

*ANS. to Prop. N. 26.* 1. The most disagreeing Protestants that are, yet that far agree, that these Books of Scriptures which were never doubted of in the Church, are the undoubted Word of God, and a perfect Rule of Faith. 2. That the Sense of them which God intended, whatsoever it is, is certainly true; so that they believe implicitly even those very Truths against which they err; and why an implicit Faith in Christ and his Word should not suffice as well as an implicit Faith in your Church, I have desired to be resolved by many of your side, but never could. 3. That they are so far their best Endeavours to believe the Scriptures in the true Sense, and so live according to it. Thus if they perform (as I hope many on all sides do) truly and sincerely, it is impossible but that they should believe right in all things necessary to Salvation, that is, in all those things that pertain to the Covenant between God and Man in Christ; for so much is not only plainly, but frequently contained in Scriptures; and believing right the Covenant, if they for their Parts perform the Condition required of them, which is sincere Obedience, they should they not expect that God will perform his Promise and give them Salvation? For as for other things which lie without the Covenant, and are therefore less necessary, if by reason of the seeming Conflict which is sometimes between Scripture, Reason, and Authority on the one side, and Scripture, Reason, and Authority on the other, if by reason of the Variety of Tempers, Abilities, Educations, and unavoidable Prejudices, whereby Men misunderstandings

And others are variously formed and fashioned, they do embrace several Opinions, whereof some must be erroneous: so say that God will damnation for such Errors, who are Lovers of him, and Lovers of Truth, is to rob Man of his Comfort, and God of his Goodness: Is it to make Man despicable, and God a Tyrant?

*H. 2. N. 21.* That it is sufficient for any Man's Salvation, that he believe the Scripture, that he endeavour to believe it in the true Sense of it as far as concerns his Duty; and that he conform his Life unto it, either by Obedience or Repentance. He that does so, (and all Protestants, according to the Dictates of their Religion, should do so) may be secured that he cannot err Fundamentally, so that notwithstanding their Differences, and your Presumptions, *the same Means may rescue them all.*

*H. 2. N. 22.* Who can find fault with him [Dr. Paine] for saying; If through want of Means of Instruction, Incapacity, inevitable Ignorance, a Man die in Error, he may be saved: But if he be negligent in seeking Truth, unwilling to find it, either doth he stand without, or might see it and will not, that his Case is dangerous, and without Repentance desperate?

*H. 2. N. 23.* Merchants, with much more Reason, and much more Clarity, you must suppose that many of these Controversies which are now disputed among Christians, (all which profess themselves Lovers of Christ, and that desire to know his Will and do it) are *not* *settled* by their Means which God hath provided, and so not necessary to be decided; or if they be, yet *not* *so plainly and evidently*, as to oblige Men to hold one way. Or lastly, if decidable, and evidently decided, yet you may hope that the crying Fault by reason of some Will before their Eyes, *such* *conspicuous* *Ignorance*, or *unavoidable* *Prejudice*, does not fix the Question to be decided against him, and so opposes not that which he doth know to be the Word of God, but only that which you know to be so, and which he might know, were he void of Prejudice: which is a Fault, I confess, but a Fault which is incident even to good and ho-

nest Men very often, and not of such a desperate Disposition as you make it, to be standing upon God Almighty, and to give him the law to his Face.

### *Of the Necessity of a visible Judge in Controversies of Religion, as necessary in Civil Matters.*

*H. 2. N. 17.*—In Civil Controversies we are obliged only to external Passive Obedience, and not to an internal and active. We are bound to obey the Sentence of the Judge, or not to resist it, but we always to believe it just. But in Matters of Religion, such a Judge is required whom we should be obliged to believe to have judged right: so that in Civil Controversies every honest understanding Man is fit to be a Judge, but in Religion none but he that is *sanctified*.

1. In Civil Cases there is Means and Power, when the Judge has declared its command Men to obey his Sentence: otherwise I believe Laws alone would be to as much Purpose for the ending of Differences, as Laws and Judges both. But all the Power in the World is neither fit to convince, nor able to compel a Man's Conscience to consent to any thing: Worldly Terror may prevail to sin, with some Men profess a Religion which they believe not, (such Men, I think, who know best that there is a Heaven provided for Men, and a Hell for those that offend against God's Truth, are necessary to be protected) but to force either any Man to believe what he believes not, or any honest Man to dissemble what he does believe, (if God commands him to profess) or to profess what he does not believe, all the Powers in the World are too weak, without the Powers of Hell to assist them.

2. In Civil Matters it is impossible Truth should hold the Last in question, and therefore too; and therefore either the Plaintiff must impose the Defendant by dissembling his Position, or the Defendant must the Plaintiff, by keeping the Signs from him: and in Controversies of Religion the Case is similar, with I may hold my Opinion, and see you

Concerning Errors damnable, or not  
damnable.

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